



Protecting your home from Brush Fires



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When a fire is moving toward your home

**If you see
smoke or
fire in your
area, quickly
report it by
dialing**

911

**Take note of
the location
so that the
dispatcher
can send
emergency
equipment to
the correct
place.**

Should you stay at home or leave? Always consider safety first. If you have any doubts at all, evacuate immediately. If you have not been ordered to evacuate, the following actions are recommended:

1. Place valuable documents in your car, along with medications and other essentials needed for evacuation.
2. Park all vehicles heading out, with the windows rolled up and the keys in the ignition. Do not park vehicles where they will obstruct fire apparatus. Convertibles or cars with padded tops should go inside the garage.
3. Close all doors and windows including the garage door. Close all drapes, curtains and blinds. Lightweight curtains should be removed.
4. Turn on all lights, inside and out, to assist firefighters in locating your home.
5. Place a ladder, preferably a metal one, against the side of your house to the roof.
6. Place combustible garden furniture and pads in the garage or house. Do not leave anything that can burn near structures.
7. Connect garden hoses and leave in the "off" position. Lay the hose out straight to remove kinks. Rubber or neoprene hoses are best as some plastic hoses fail when exposed to heat. Hoses should reach completely around your house. Always keep a shovel handy.
8. If you have an older wooden roof, wet it down with your hose until the fire is within 600 feet, then go inside. There is little value in wetting down brush, trees and fire-resistant roofs ahead of a fire.
9. Fill large trash cans with water and place them around your house in case your water pressure drops.
10. Keep a flashlight and portable radio with you at all times and stay tuned to your local news station.

When a fire hits

EVACUATION

If evacuation is ordered, or if you feel your safety is jeopardized, keep the family together, take your valuable papers and drive to a safe area. Always follow the instructions of firefighters. Most important of all—keep calm. Excited people cause panic.

IF YOU CANNOT EVACUATE

- Keep all family members together inside the house. This is the safest place to be when the fire hits. Close all doors and windows.
- Stay inside while the fire passes directly over and around your house. This can happen in a matter of minutes during high winds.

AFTER THE FIRE HAS PASSED

- Go outside after the fire has passed and use your ladder and garden hose to extinguish any spot fires on your roof and around the exterior of your home.
- Keep small rugs handy to dip in water and extinguish spot fires.
- Use shovels to "spray" dirt over small spot fires.
- After the fire has passed, look outside and survey the area. If you can safely leave, do so.
- Above all, use good judgment and stay safe.

Dear Neighbor:

In most parts of the country, summer is the season of highest fire danger. But here in the San Diego area, our largest brush fires occur in September through December, when Santa Ana winds can blow 50-100 miles per hour. By following these guidelines from the San Diego area firefighting agencies, your home will have a much better chance of surviving a wind-driven firestorm.


Assemblymember
MARTY BLOCK

Brush clearance requirements

Brush clearance is a year-round responsibility. As a property owner, you have both a legal and moral obligation to maintain your land in a fire-safe condition.

SAN DIEGO AREA RESIDENTS

0-10 FEET: Remove limbs within 10 feet of the chimney. Cut away dead branches and limbs that overhang the roof. Clear flammable vegetation within ten feet of liquefied petroleum gas storage tanks.

0-30 FEET: Clear all hazardous flammable vegetation to mineral soil for a distance of 30 feet from any structure except ornamental specimens.

0-70 FEET: Cut flammable vegetation to a height of 18 inches.

0-200 FEET: If the county deems the area to be a high-risk area, flammable vegetation must be cut to a height of 18 inches.

CITY OF SAN DIEGO RESIDENTS

0-10 FEET: Clear all flammable vegetation from roadways and combustible fence lines.

0-100 FEET: All grass, brush and weeds must be cut to 3 inches or less in height. This does not apply to well-maintained and irrigated landscaping. Single trees, landscape shrubbery or cultivated ground covers may be permitted. Trees must be trimmed up to a third of their height up to a maximum of 6 feet. Plants shall be trimmed up and spaced 18 feet apart.

100-200 FEET: An additional 100 feet of clearance is required by the Fire Department for a total clearance of 200 feet in all areas. Hazardous vegetation should be reduced in this area by 50%. Chipping and spreading will be allowed in this area. Chipping and spreading may have a maximum of 3 inches of depth.

Maintain your property before a fire occurs

LANDSCAPE PLANTING

- The following are high-fire hazard plants when grown near structures: Acacia, Cedar, Cypress, Eucalyptus, Fir, Juniper, Pine and Pampas Grass.
- Vegetation should be properly maintained and not used in a manner that could transmit fire from native growth to structures.
- Choose plants that are fire resistant. Restrict re-growth of native brush by replanting with low-growing ground cover.
- Maintain all plants by regularly removing dead branches, leaves and other flammable materials.
- For trees taller than 18 feet, remove lower branches less than 6 feet off the ground.
- For trees and shrubs less than 18 feet high, remove lower branches to clear one third of the tree's height.

YARD UPKEEP

- Stack firewood at least 30 feet from structures, and 18 inches off the ground.
- Remove flammable vegetation within 120 feet of woodpiles.
- Remove unnecessary construction materials, pine needles, leaves and debris. You may not leave the cut material on the ground near roadways.

ROOF AND CHIMNEYS

- Provide 5 feet of clearance above the roof surface.
- Clean all dead leaves from your roof and rain gutters.
- Cover your chimney outlet with an approved spark arrester of a metal or nonflammable screen made of 1/2 inch or smaller mesh.
- Remove all vegetation within 10 feet of chimneys.

ROADWAYS AND PRIVATE STREETS

- Clear all flammable vegetation within 10 feet of roads and driveways.
- Cut back overhanging tree branches above roads to provide at least 14 feet of vertical clearance.
- Identify at least two exit routes out of your neighborhood.
- Make sure dead-end roads and long driveways have turnaround areas wide enough for emergency vehicles.
- Post signs on private streets that describe limited access such as "Not a Through Street," "Sharp Turns," etc.
- Make sure your address can be seen from the street. Numbers must be a minimum of 4 inches high and must contrast with their background.
- Los Angeles County residents must provide 3 feet of clearance around fire hydrants.

EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY

- Ensure that your emergency water source is easy to find and ready to use.
- If you have a swimming pool, consider obtaining a gas-powered water pump with a firehose and nozzle. Be sure to test the pump monthly.

CONSTRUCTION TIPS

- Use fire-resistant building materials.
- Ensure that electric service lines, fuse boxes and circuit breaker panels are installed and maintained according to code.
- Enclose the underside of balconies, eaves and above-ground decks with fire resistant materials.
- Limit the size and number of windows that face large areas of hazardous vegetation.
- Use dual-pane or triple-pane windows whenever possible.

